A SERMON of Gods Prouidence.

Very godly and profitable: Preached at *South-shoobery* in Essex, by *Arthur Dent*, Minister of Gods word.

The fourth impression.

Iohn. 19. *vers.* 10. 11.

Then said *Pilate* vnto him, speakest thou not vnto mee, knowest thou not that I haue power to crucifie thee, and haue power to loose thee.

Iesus answered, thou couldest haue no power at all against mee, except it were giuen thee from aboue.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A platforme made for

the proofe of Gods prouidence, that is, for the examining of the trueth of this *doctrine, whether God by his prouidence,* rule all things generally, and euery creature, *and action particularly.*

Text.

The lotte is cast into the lap, but the whole disposition thereof is of the Lord. *Pro.* 16.33.



IT were to bee wished that all Christians did vnderstand, that, which with mouth they confesse, when they rehearse the articles of their faith, gathered out of the Apostles doctrine.

The Confession is briefe, and euery word in it very significant, and well vnderstood, would rote all heresies out of our mindes.

The principles of religion are therein contained, and if hee bee but a weake Philosopher, that is ignorant in the principles of Philosophy, and if it be a shame for all artificers to be ignorant in the grounds of those arts they profesſe, it is a greater shame for vs Christians to make shew of christianity, and yet to be ignorant in the rudiments of our Religion.

I would to God that euery one, that hath the name of a christiã did throughly vnderstand, & were fully instructed in them, then needed not I labour so much, for the proofe of this doctrine.

For euery one of vs, when we do confesſe God to be almighty, doe acknowledg that he by his prouidence ruleth euery thing: and that wee may know what we say, I purpose chiefly to handle these two points.

First that Christ the Sonne of God, hath the selfe same prouidence, that God the Father hath: Secondly, that the prouidence of God, doth governe all things generally, and euery speciall thing specially.

And yet in handling these two, I will not

not recite al that may be said touching this matter, but only touch some chiefe pointes summarily, which may helpe you the better to vnderstand the large and learned tracts, that many notable men haue written hereof. For the first:

That Christ the Sonne of GOD doth gouerne all things as well as God the Father, is prooued by reason, example, and authoritie.

By reason, if God by his wisdome made the world: that is, if that the eternall wisdome of God, which is his word, the euerlasting Sonne of God, was present with God, when he made the world: hee is also with him in gouerning the world: but hee was with God when he made the world, therefore he is with him gouerning of it.

The equity of the first proposition is

grounded vpon moſt ſtrong reaſon.

For as God created the world by his wiſdome, ſo it is not to be beléeued that God gouerneth the world without his wiſdome, otherwiſe he ſhould gouerne by chance.

The ſecond propoſition is proued by thē teſtimony of the Apoſtles. Heb. 1, by whom alſo he made the worlds.

By example, Gen. 48. verſ. 13, 14, 15. Then tooke Ioſeph them both Ephraim in his right hand towards Iſraels left hand, Manaſſeth in his left hand toward Iſraels right hand, ſo he brought them vnto him.

But Iſraell ſtretched out his right hand, and laide it on Ephraims head, which was the younger, and his left hand vppon Manaſſehs head (directing his hands on purpoſe) for Manaſſehs was the elder.

Alſo hee bleſſed Ioſeph, and ſaid the GOD before whom my Fathers Abraham & Iſack did walke, the God which hath fed me al my life lòg vnto this day.

In which words Iacob acknowledgeth Gods prouidence to ſtretch to particular men, euen to himſelfe.

The

Then it followeth as vers. 5. 26. The Angell which hath deliuered me from all euill, blesse the children, and let my name bee named vpon them, and the name of my Fathers, Abraham, and Izacke, that they may grow as fish, into a multitude in middest of the earth. In these words the holy Patriarke Iacob gineth that particular prouidence to ỹ Angell, which in the former verse hee had giuen to God: And that by the name of Angell hee vnderstandeth no creature, is hereby proued, in that he affirmeth, that this Angell had power to bleſſe: saying to him, Bleſſe the children: He then is the Angell whom Iacob was wont to call, the angell of the Lord, that is the Sonne of God.

Therefore in this place Iacob attributeth a prouidence ouer all things and persons, to the Angell: that is the Sonne of God, as well as to God the Father.

By authority Iohn. 5, ver. 17. My Father worketh and I worke: This worke that Christ speaketh of, is not to be vnderstood of the creation onely, but also of the gouerning of all things created.

For this particle (hetherto) sheweth that he ment not onely that first worke of his in creating all things with his Father, but also another worke, which he daily exerciseth, which cannot bee vnderstood of any other then of gouerning all things with his Father.

But here we must obserue this rule that the workes of the Trinity are vndeuided.

Therfore that which is the Fathers worke is the worke also of the Sonne, and of the holy Ghost.

That the Sonne of GOD doth the same workes that the Father doth, is already prooued: the same is to bee affirmed also of the holy Ghost, by the warrant of Gods word, as by that I read in the 139. Psalme, Whether shall I go from thy presence? If I ascend into Heauen, thou art there: If I lie downe in hell thou art there: let me take the winges of the morning, and dwell in the vttermost partes of the Sea, yet thether shall thine hand lead mee and thy right hand hold mee: Thus is the first poynt briefly prooued, that Christ

Christ the Sonne of God, and the holy Ghost, do gouerne all things as well as God the Father.

Now to the second: that God by his prouidence gouerneth all and euery thing.

There are very many that can willingly graunt, that God by his prouidence gouerneth al thinges in general, but that euery particular thing is ruled by the same, they deny: with these men therefore I minde to deale somewhat large, though not so learnedly, as the cause requireth: (& who is able to handly it worthily?) Philosophers haue in this poynt had sundry opinions: Epicurus said, that all things were ruled by chance and fortune, and that God liued idely, and at ease in the Heauens, which opinion, as impious, all men in wordes condemne, and yet so we liue that our liues are euident proofes against vs, that in heart and soule we imbrace it.

For surely if we thought any better of GOD then Epicurus did, we would not walk so directly in Epicurus pathes as we do, or liue so licentiously

as

as though God regarded vs not.

The Peripatetickes, and other sort of Philosophers, broched another opinion, teaching that those things which are aboue the Heauens, are moued, guided and gouerned by God himselfe: but those things that are vnder the circle of the Mone, are gouerned partly by chance and fortune, partly by the counsailes and deuises of men, partly by a brutish or senceles force of nature.

There is a third opinion of the Stoicks, which is that all thinges are ruled by fate or destiny, that is by a secret order and linck of causes: in which chaine all things are so surely tyed, that both God himselfe and man are straighted within those bounds.

This was a very dainty opinion in the iudgement of the Poets: who to excuse the weakenes of their God Iupiter, fained that he wept, for that he was so hindred by the force of destiny, that he could not set Sarpedo at liberty.

The fourth opinion is Platoes, who graunted that God by his prouidence ruleth all things in generall, which afterward God cõmitted to petty Gods, halfe

halfe Gods, and diuels, who haue the charge and care of particular things: From these foure opinions springing all other whatsoeuer, touching Gods prouidence: and there is no one opinion, which may not easily be reduced to one of these.

But some of vs (euen of vs Christians) flying one danger, run into another: for that they dare not deny that God by his prouidence ruleth all things, yet will they not grant, that by it, hee gouerneth euery particular thing, least they should thereby be driuen (as they think) to some absurdities: thus whilst they would auoide absurdity, they commit impiety and fal away from the truth most dangerously: But farre bee this from your heart (right worshipful) and that it may neuer possesse you: auoid the cause that worketh it in them, which is ignorance of the word of God: and for that God in great mercy hath kindled in your heart a desire of knowledge, quench not that godly desire, in you, but pursue hotly with hearty and feruent prayer, after knowledge, and you shall finde it: and if you shall finde

it,

it you shal certainely know, that there will no absurdity be inforced vpon any doctrine grounded vpon Gods word, & that you néd not feare this doctrine, as they do, I wil first discourse breifly of the truth of it, and wil proue, that God gouerneth by his prouidence all things generally, and euery particular thing particularly: then wil I answere to all those chiefe obiections which are brought against it, and by which some vaine men think to make the doctrine absurde. To the first:

For that this argument hath béne diuersly handled, and men haue béne very curious in discoursing thereof: especially since what way soeuer they winde themselues, many absurdities doe séeme to follow them: it wil be best I thinke for me to kéepe me in the high beaten way, least séeking by-wayes I wander out of the way: I meane to discourse so of this doctrine, as I am taught in the word of God & then diligently to remoue al those things whatsoeuer they be not beséeming the most pure nature of God, which in the iudgment of man, shal séeme hereof to follow

But

But if my ignorance were so great, that I could not remoue these inconueniences: yet notwithstanding, are you & all Christians bound to receiue with all humilitie this true doctrine: & to blame me, not the doctrine, if I be not able to cleare it of all those things, which in the iudgement of man may séeme absurd: And although it is not my purpose to examine al that Philosophers & others say against the gouerning of euery thing by the prouidence of God, yet in my minde, all that they cã say against it may by this one argument be easily ouerthrowne. If he be a God (which they all confesse, & though they would deny it, yet may it easily bée proued against them) he is a most perfect thing: but ý which is most perfect hath nothing perfecter then it selfe neither can we imagine any thing to be more perfect, then that which of it selfe is truly & absolutely most perfect: therfore there is nothing, neither can wee imagine any thing to bee more perfect then God: hereupon I infer if God did not gouern al things in general, & euerie thing in particular, we might well

imagine

imagine that there was some-thing more perfect then God: euen such a deity, which had charge and care of euery particuler thing: but it is shewed ꝑ no such deity or Godhead cā be imagined.

It is false therefore, that they hereupon would infer that God by his ꝓuidence ruleth not euery particuler thing & the contrary is true, which we teach: for else surely that God, which they dreame of to liue idly, and at ease, & to haue no care of any thing, as they babble, is not in truth a God, but as Tully sometime said of their maister Epicurus so say I of them, that they in words acknowledge a God, but in truth deny ꝑ there is any. But leauing Philosophers let vs see what the Scripture teacheth vs: the first place I will vse for ꝑ proofe of this doctrine, I take out of the Epistle to the Hebrewes the 1. Chapt. verse 3. where it is said of the sonne of God, that He beareth vp, that is, moueth and gouerneth all things by his mighty worde: hee that graunteth that hee ruleth all things, excepteth no one thing from his gouernment: We may then well conclude out of this place of

God,

God, that God gouerneth all, and euery thing.

But least I should leaue any starting hole for the aduersary to winde out at, let vs further see what the Scripture teacheth vs of the gouerning of euery particular thing by Gods prouidence.

Neither will I heape vp many places, but content my selfe with a fewe examples, out of which the truth of this doctrine may be gathered.

And thus I do endeuour to proue it briefly: All the creatures of God are either indued with ỹ gift of free choise, or else want this liberty of choise: they that haue it, are Angels, both good and euill, and men also both good and euill: they that want this liberty of choyse, are all other liuing things created by God, & also these his creatures, which haue no life: and yet of all these creatures, God hath a speciall care, so as he disposeth of euery one of them according to his pleasure.

The booke of Iob, and the Psalmes, do very often handle this argument, so that if I should gather out of them all their proofes, I should write out almost

there whole bookes: yet some I will bring, and leaue the rest for you to gather, hoping it will be a means to bring you to the often reading of them.

In the 147. Psalme the Prophet saith thus of God, that he couereth the Heauen with cloudes, and prepareth raine for the earth, and maketh the grasse to grow vppon the Mountaines: But the cloudes, the raine, and the grasse are things without soule & life, and yet by his wonderfull prouidence he driueth, and ruleth at his pleasure the cloudes in the ayre: he sendeth the raine down vpon the earth, and he maketh the grasse to grow: In the 148. Psalme the Prophet saith, that fire and haile, snow, and vapours, stormie windes doe execute his word, and what is it to execute the word of God, but to be ruled and gouerned by his word? it is to be at his beck and pleasure: Againe, in the 135. Psalme, it is said, that whatsoeuer pleased the Lord, that did hee in Heauen and in earth, in the Sea and all the depthes: hee bringeth vp the Cloudes from the endes of the earth, and maketh the lightnings

lightnings with the raine, hee draweth fourth the windes out of his treasures: and Christ our Sauiour in the 6. of Math. biddeth vs learne how the Lillies of the field doe grow, they labour not, neither spin: and a little afterward hee telleth vs, that God doth cloath the grasse of the field: these few places proue that God hath a prouident care, to keepe and gouerne euen his lifelesse creatures, not onely generally, but also particularly: as clouds, raine, windes, grasse, fire, haile, snow, vapours, lillies, and such like: the like prouident care hee hath for other of his creatures, whome hee hath indued with life and sence, but not with reason, and that liberty of choyce, whereof I spake before: We read in the 147. Psalme, that GOD giueth to beasts their foode, and to the young Rauens that cry: and in the 104. Psalme verse 14. the Prophet saith, that GOD causeth grasse to growe for the Cattell, and afterward in the 27 verse he saith that all beasts, foules, and fishes, waite vpon thee O Lord that thou maist giue them foode in due season: Thou giuest

it to them, and they gather it, thou openest thy hand and they are filled with good things: This also our Saviour Christ affirmeth in the 6. of Mathew, saying, behold the fowles of the heauen, for they sowe not, neither reape, nor carry into the barnes: yet your Heauenly good Father feedeth them. And in the 10. of Math. Are not two Sparrowes sold for a farthing and one of them shall not fal on the ground without your Father? meaning God: by these few places you may se it sufficiently proued, that GOD hath a prouident care of euery particular creature, vpon whom he hath not bestowed the free liberty of choise, whether they haue not life, or haue life and sence and want reason. Now as for those creatures to whom God hath giuen that gift of free choise, which I said were Angels and men, some do thinke, that God in truth hath a speciall prouident care ouer man whom he made after his owne Image and likenesse: but not ouer other creatures: which opinion how false it is you may easily gather out of that I haue already written. Others do make

this

this to be the difference betwæne man & man, that God taketh a special care of the godly, but casteth away all care of the wicked: but the word of God doth manifestly ouerthrow this opinion: In the 5. of Mathew. Christ our Sauiour teacheth vs, that our heauenly Father maketh the Sun to rise on the euil and on the good, and sendeth raigne on the iust and vniust. And Paul in his first Epistle to Timothy the 4. chapter, saith that God is Sauiour of all men specially of those that beleeue: wherof I gather that God hath a speciall care of those that are his, but yet not so, as that hee leaueth ỳ wicked to be ruled by chance and fortune: for if God haue a care of those things & creatures ỳ the wicked possesse, as of their cattle, grasse, and corne and such like: surely hee prouideth also for them, the owners & maysters of those creatures: neither can he be prouident and carefull for the godly, but hee must also gouerne and rule the wicked according to the pleasure of his diuine power. For as a Prince and Generall of an Armie is not onely carefull for the Troupes and

companies of Soldiers that be in his hoste: but also for munition & victaile necessary for them, that he may haue his army so furnished, that it may be a terror to the enemy, and may kepe them amongst whome hee lyeth incamped in such dutifull obedience, that they may bee ready to doe whatsoeuer his Captaines and officers command them: so can it not be that God doth prouide for his Church, but he must also moderate and gouerne all those things, without which his Church cannot be here vpon the earth.

Such things as appertaine to the nourishment, cloathing, safe and quiet harboring of the members of the Church: They therefore who are not of the true Church, are yet, for the benefit of Gods Church, to be ruled by his prouidence, so are the Patriarches said to haue found fauour in the eyes of infidels, for that the Lord did rule and moue the hearts of infidels, which way it pleased him.

Now how GOD ruleth not onely euery particular man, but also all the seuerall actions of men, is prooued by that

that which is in the 16. of the Prouerbs, commit thy workes vnto the Lord, & thy thoughts shal be directed: And by that also which is in the 4. of Iames: Goe to now yee that say, to day or to morrow wee will goe into such a Cittie, and continue there a yeare, and buy and sell and get gaine: and yet yee cannot tell what shall bee to morrow: for what is your life? it is euen a vapour, it appeareth for a little time, and afterward vanisheth away: for that wee ought to say, if the Lord will, and if wee liue wee will doe this or that: Thus Iames speaking of the actions or doings of men, affirmeth that God ruleth them all, so that without his will wee can doe nothing, no not so much as passe from one place to another: and Paul confesseth that he was often hindred and staid by God, that he could not goe to those Churches he purposed, vntill hee had his iourney granted him by the will of God: God therefore ruleth all the seuerall actions of all men. I will vse onely two examples, to illustrate and make plaine this most true doctrine, that God gouerneth

the seuerall actions of all men, both good and bad: In the history of Ioseph many things to this purpose are to bee found. The end of that history was, that which Ioseph spake of, Genes. 50. you thought euill against mee saith hee to his brethren, but God disposed it to good: In this history these men and their seuerall actions are to be wayed: First, father Iacob, then the brethren of Ioseph, Ioseph himselfe, the Ishmaelites, to whom he was sold, that light huswife his mistris Putiphars wife, Pharao and his seruants; the actions of all these persons are diuers & very different one from another, some of them were lawdable, others detestable, and yet some of those better then others, and some of those actions neither to be altogether allowed nor dispraised, and yet as Ioseph witnesseth, God by his prouidence ruleth and disposeth them all, both men and their actions to Iosephs good.

So as Dauid saith, Psalm. 105. that God sent a man before them, Ioseph was sold for a slaue: For so God gouerneth the wicked actions of those men,

men, that the most peruerse practises of Iosephs brethren, the shameleſſe and beastly part of Putiphars wife, and other heauy actions, had a most happy end: So that euen those things that they did to Ioseph, purposing by them vtterly to destroy him, brought Ioseph to great honour: so mighty and wonderfull is God, that he is able to make the light to shine out of darkenesse. Moreouer in the last chapter of the prophesie of Ionas, we shall see how wonderfully God doth not onely gouerne men, but also all maner of creatures sensible & vnsensible: for I read that Ionas went out of the citty of Niniuie, & sat on the East-side of the citty, & there made him a booth and sat vnder it in the shadow till he might see what should be done to the citty: & the Lord prepared a Gourd, & made it come vp ouer Ionas, that it might be a shadow ouer his head, and deliuer him from his griefe: So Ionas was exceeding glad of the Gourd. But God prepared a worme when the morning began to rise the next day, and it smote the Gourd that it withered: and when

when the Sunne did arise, God prepared also a feruent East winde, & the Sunne beate vpon the head of Ionah, that hee fainted, and wished in his heart to dye, and said; It is better for mee to dye then to liue; in this that I haue written out of Ionas wee haue these things to say: First Ionah a man, the most excellentest creature, the other baser creatures, as the Gourd, the worme, and the winde: the worme is a creature that hath life in it, and is of that kind of beasts that be deuided in their bodies, the head & breast from their belly and taile, the Gourd & the wind they are creatures without life, and yet you see how God by his prouidence ruleth & moueth at his pleasure all these creatures. If Epicurus had beene at this sight, hee would haue ascribed all to chance: if Aristotle, to naturall causes: if Chrysippus or Zeno Stoicks, to fate and destiny: if Plato to some petty God: and amongst them all there had not beene one word of the truth of God.

But the holy Ghost attributeth the sourse of gouerning al these things to God

God alone, who prepared them all for Ionah his good: for by these meanes, Ionah that was wandring was set in the right way, as if you will read the chapter you may see more fully of that which I haue already written. I may safely conclude, that both all the creatures which want the gift of choice, & all they that haue it, are gouerned and ruled by God, by his most high and mighty prouidence.

Of the Angels, which I placed at the first amongst these creatures, that haue the liberty of choice, I will write now the lesse, hoping that I shall haue this backe againe to view, polish, and inlarge: but their name teacheth vs that they are ruled by God himselfe, for they are called Angeli Angels, that is, messengers sent from God: and in the Epistle to the Hebrews are called the ministers, and seruants of God.

Thus much for the first part, that is for the truth of this doctrine, that God by his prouidence ruled al things in generall, and euery particular thing in particular.

Now I come to that I promised to handle

handle in the second place, namely to the vnfolding and answering of those arguments which are made against this doctrine. The first argument they make is this: God cannot gouern all things generally, and euery creature and action without exceeding toile and griefe of mind: But it agreeth with the nature of God, that hee rest in quiet & be free from all labors: Therefore God doth not gouerne all and euery particular thing.

To this argument drawne thus from the nature of God, I answere, that their first proposition is false, which is that God cannot gouerne all things generally and particularly without exceeding toile, and griefe of minde: but for that I will not only deny it as false, but shew the reasons that moue me so to do, you must know that there are diuers kinds of actions, some are naturall, some are violent, other some meane: that is neither altogether natural, nor altogether violent: naturall actions are they that do flow from the principles of nature it selfe, without any helpe elsewhere: such are

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the round motions of the heauens, the flowing and ebbing of the Sea, that light things do of their naturall lightnesse mount vpward, heauy things all downeward, that we breath, and such like: these actions are done without any labor, because they moue of themselues without any other help: Other actions there are, which are done by force, and therefore are called violent, as by force to make a stone mount vpward, whose nature is to fall downeward. And such like violent actions, which cannot long last as Aristotle teacheth, because they are done with force. There is another sort of actions which I called meane, whose beginnings are of nature, but yet they cannot bee done vnlesse they bee helped by some other meanes, as to eate, to drinke, to walke, and such like. But now that, that God doth, bee doth without labour, because hee doth it naturally, and therefore most freely: againe, there is no force that can compell GOD, and therefore hee worketh of him-selfe freely, and without any compulsion:

neither

neither is he troubled with griefs, but gouerneth all things according to the rule of his will: neither is there any thing more agreeable to the nature of God, then to gouerne, and preserue the whole worlde, euen with the word of his power.

A second argument of theirs is this. It is an vnmete thing for God, and cleane repugnant to his nature, to entermeddle in filthy, and vncleane matters: but he cannot gouerne euery seuerall creature, and their actions, but he must entermeddle with many vncleane and filthy matters: therefore he doth not gouerne them.

I deny the second proposition, which is, that God cannot gouerne euery seuerall creature & their actions, but he must minglehimselfe with many vncleane and filthy matters: For that amongst the creatures, and their actions, there are many vnclean things: this consequence, though it be the ground of the proposition is false, for although the power of God is in all his creatures, & ruleth all, yet doth it not therefore follow, that the nature

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of God doth entermeddle with the vnpure actions of his creatures, which may be made plaine by this similitude: the Sunne of all visible creatures most excellent (man onely excepted) doth most set forth the glory of God: it doth shine in euery place, so that it shineth often vpon the dunghil, and though the beames therof doe heate the dunghil, as they do all other places, and things which they pierce: Yet for all that the Sunne is not polluted with the defilements and vncleanesse of it, neither doth the substance of the beames of the Sun mingle it selfe with those things which it pierceth.

When one laide this in Diogenes his dish, that he went into a stewes or brothel-house, why saith hee the Sun commeth thither also, and yet is not defiled therewith: thereby shewing that a wise & godly man though he enter into vncleane and filthy places, and come into the company of filthy persons, doth not forth-with ioyne himselfe to their filthines, neither is infected with their vices: If therefore this Philosopher could enter into the stewes, and

come forth againe vnspotted with their vncleanenesse, so that their filthinesse could not fasten vpon him: much lesse in God (whose nature is most pure and simple in gouerning of his creatures) infected with their filthinesse.. There is a third obiection, which they thus frame: Euery wise and good gouernour, vnlesse hee bee greatly hindred, bringeth his worke that hee frameth, and that thing that he ruleth to a good, perfect and wished end: This may be proued by many examples, as by the example of a skilfull Pilot, who directeth & bringeth his ship to the purposed hauen, and such like: but nothing can let God from perfecting his workes, & yet many of his creatures, as many monsters, mad men, lame, are imperfect. Therefore God ruleth not euery generation and conception; To vnloose this knot we must remember this distinction of order: there are two sorts of orders or courses ỹ God taketh in gouerning all things: the one of them we may call ordinary, which God doth ordinarily, the other extraordinary with which order though we be not acquain-

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ted, yet doth God himselfe know the cause why he so worketh: & yet of this may we not conclude, that God in his workes is contrary to himselfe: for if to vs there appeare some diuersity and difference in the gouernment of all things by God, certainely that difference is not of Gods rule, but of the vnstable iudgement of our troubled minds: for Gods workes are not to be balanced by our iudgements, which are deceiuable, and for the most part vntrue: Augustine proposed the example of two children, one of which is dutiful and louing to his father, the other is a wicked stubborne child: both their fathers are deadly sicke, the good childe praieth earnestly vnto God, to deliuer his father from his sicknes: the graceless graft thinketh euery houre twenty vntil his father bee breathlesse: both their fathers died and that according to Gods appointment and direction.

But now that childe that prayed for the prolonging of his fathers life highly pleased GOD: and yet it pleased not GOD, that his father should liue any longer: And againe,

that

that childe that longed for his fathers death, as highly displeased God, and yet it was Gods pleasure that his father should die: how commeth it to passe, that that which pleaseth GOD may displease him also, and that which displeaseth him please him? for he was pleased with the good childs kindnesse, but not pleased that his father should liue: and gaine displeased with the vnnaturall part of the lewd childe, and yet pleased with his fathers death.

Surely there is in God a certaine secret ordinance which yet is iust, and a certaine ordinance open and manifested which also is righteous; But certaine idle companions to draw both Augustine and vs into hatred, for this doctrine, obiect against vs, that they cannot perceiue in God this double will, which we speake of, to wit a secret and a reuealed will: for they say we all know and you confesse, that God is most plaine without all shew of doublenesse, and therefore his will must bee also as plaine, and euen so is it, though we cannot comprehend it: but let them first answere to that which

Augustine

Auguſtine and wee haue propoſed, and will they, nill they, they muſt acknowledge with vs, that this difference of will, of which I haue ſpoken, is not properly in God, but in vs, who according to our reach and capacity measure diuine matters: and therefore in reſpect of vs and of our capacity, there ſeemeth to be this difference in the will of God: According to our cenſure and iudgement, wee will iudge the birth of monſters, mad-men & crooked-men, to be an vnperfect worke of God, but in the iudgement of God their creation is moſt perfect and abſolute.

If Ariſtotle were aſked what the cauſe were of their imperfections and deformities, hee would anſwere that they proceeded of a defect and want in nature. But Chriſt ſaith otherwiſe of the man that was borne blind in the 9. of *Ioh.* Neither hath this man ſinned, nor his parents, but that the workes of GOD ſhould be ſhewed on him: that is, that God might be glorified by him. Now ſince the laſt end of al things is the glory of God, and ſince al things are to be accounted perfect, which attaine to

their desired end, and since the glory of God more appeareth by the imperfections of some of his creatures, then if he had made them all of one forme and perfection, surely we may not iudge any of his workes vnperfect: I grant y if they bee considered in themselues, there will appeare in them some imperfection: but when they are referred to the glory of God, if they illustrate and set it forth, they are euen therefore to be accounted perfect: for if no man should be mad, if none deformed, none lame, none blinde, wee would ascribe the perfection of our birth, which wee perceiue that all men haue necessarily either to nature or to our parents: and we would easily slip into this opinion, that wee had our selues also of our parents: but since there appeareth such a diuersity in the outward formes of creatures, the prouidence of God doth more clearly appeare by that their difference in shape. In the iudgement of man, many flies and wormes, and all sort of serpents are reputed not onely vnprofitable but also hurtfull: But the Lord (as Moyses sheweth in his song)

song) calleth them his treasures, out of which hee drawoth vengeance for his enimies, as arrowes out of a quiuer.

These were the shafts hee shoke Pharao with; With these Antiochus, with these Herod was also punished: who therefore will account them vnprofitable, or who superfluous, since the Lord himselfe hath such vses to put them to?

There are also in them many profitable things for man, whereof some wee know not, other-some the Phisicians know, as Nicander & others haue very learnedly written of them: ancient learned Chrisostome in his tenth Homily vppon Genesis, vsed this similitude; If (saith hee) in earthly matters when wee see these things that bee done, approoued by graue and mighty men, wee mislike not their censure, nor gain-say it, but preferre their iudgement before our owne: how much more should we carry the same minde of all visible creatures, which we know that God the Creator of all things made? That since wee haue receiued his

censure of them all, that all that hee made was very good, let vs suspend our iudgments & bury them in silence, and let vs not dare to prefer the iudgements of al men before the Lords: and wee may perswade our selues with strong and sufficient arguments, that the Lord made all things in great wisdome and mercy, and in a word, that the Lord made nothing vnaduisedly ... without cause: but though we know not the causes of his workes, because of the weakenesse of our vnderstandings: yet hath he made all things according to his wisdom, and most mighty mercy.

Thus farre Chrysostome: If therefore by the testimony of Aristotle, nature made nothing in vaine. As the man who was vtterly ignorant of true religion, affirmed of nature, which he yet iudged to be both b ind & brutish: how much more are we bound to attribute vnto the most wise creator of all things this perfection in his creation, that hee made nothing in vaine, but all things in great wisdome: since all his works redounded to his glory, which is the

last

laſt, and the chiefeſt end of all things, and by the common conſent of all men, euery thing is iudged either perfect or vnperfect, by the attaining of his end. There is a fourth argumẽt, thus made againſt the prouidence of God: if God who is moſt wiſe and righteous in his iudgments, do gouerne all things, and euery particular thing, there ſhould not be ſo great troubles in cõmon wealths and ſpecially in the Church, whereof the Lord hath a ſpeciall care, for that it is his Sanctuary: but both in Church and common-wealth there is great vnquietneſſe, ſo that all laws both diuine and humane are openly violated: good men moſt cruelly are dealt withall, euill men doe reioyce and triumph in their wickedneſſe without controulement: God therfore gouerneth not all things that are in common-wealths and in the Churches.

This argument thus drawne from the nature of Gods iuſtice (which ſeemeth to be contrary to his gouernmẽt by his prouidence, if he ſhould ſee, moderate and ſuffer all theſe out-rages & diſorders) is one of the chiefeſt props

of Epicurus his opinion: and this argument troubled many that now liue, & dayly labor to bring Epicurus name in obloquy with al men, and yet are content to liue like Epicures: & this argument also the Turkes, and our capitall enemies (the Papists) obiect most against vs: and sure it carrieth such waight with it, that Dauid confesseth y he was so astonied, that his feet were almost gone: and his steppes had wel neare slipt, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, and punishments and hard entertainment of the godly, vntill he went into the sanctuary of God: then vnderstood he their end, that is, vntill Dauid entred into Gods schoole, & learned by his word and holy spirit, that he ordered al things most wisely, and iustly. After Pompey had béne put to the worst in the battaile fought betwixt Cæsar and him, in the confines of Pharsalos, & escaped by flight to Mytelene, hee went to Cratippus, and disputed with the Philosopher in his Garden, whether hee thought there was any God which by his prouidence ruled in earth: and for that before in very bad

quarels

quarels hee had had moſt proſperous ſucceſſe, as when hee had ſubdued, & in battaile vanquiſhed the inhabitants of the Eaſt part of the worꝛld, and was now in a moſt good cauſe ouercome, ſtripped off his army, & forced to fly away himſelfe alone moſt ſhamfully: hée hereof gathred that God regarded not what was done amongſt men, but ỹ all things were done by chance: thus doth ỹ wiſe men of ỹ worꝛld iudge & ſpeak of ſuch euẽts. But ỹ holy Ghoſt teacheth vs to iudge far otherwiſe of thẽ: whꝛm Moſes in his ſong Deu. 32. was to deliuer to the people the threatnings of God, if they were diſobedient, which afterward ỹ rebellious Iſraelits felt, hee vſeth this preface: perfect is the worke of the mighty God: for all his waies are iudgement: God is true and without wickednes, iuſt and righteous is hee: teaching hereby that whatſoeuer the worꝛld doth prate of the cauſes of afflictions, that GOD with great wiſdome, doth ſend forth of his treaſures all ſorts of callamities: ſometime by them to punish the wicked, ſometime to exercise the Godly

with them. For the sins of the people the hipocrite doth raigne: That is, tyrants sit in the throne of Iustice, which under pretence of executing iustice, are but hipocrites and oppresse the people. Iob. 34. verse. 30.

Woe bee to thee (saith the Prophet Isaiah) which spoylest, for thou shalt bee spoiled: And indeed, one tyrant plagueth another, and though tyrants be a plague to all nations & kingdomes, yet are they them-selues in due time in like sort punished by other tyrants, In the person of Sennacherib ỹ iudgements of God are very liuely set forth by the Prophet Isaiah in the tenth Chapter, of his prophesie: The Lord stirreth vp the king of the Assirians to punish the easterne people: Sennacherib was a wicked man, & he is a scorge to wicked people, yea he cruelly vexed the people of God, he spoileth almost all Palestina, hee besiegeth Ierusalem the chiefe Citty of that Country: And thus saith God of him by the Prophet in that place: O Ashur the rod of my wrath and the staffe in their hands is my indignation; I will send him to a dissem-

dissembling nation, and I will giue him a charge against the people of my wrath, to take the spoyle, and to take the prey, and to treade them vnder-foote like the mire of the streete. But hee thinketh not so, neither doth his heart esteeme it so: and so forth. And a little after, thus saith God by the Prophet of him: But when the Lord hath accomplished all his worke vppon Mount Sion, and Ierusalem, I will visit the fruite of the proud heart of the King of Assure, and his glorious and proude lookes, because hee said, by the power of mine owne hand haue I done it, and by my wisdome because I am wise: And a little after this, thus saith the Prophet, shal the axe boast it selfe against him that heweth therewith? If Pompey had loked on this example, thus laide forth by the Prophet, hee might haue bin better occupied and instructed then hee was by his toying with Cratippus: And this would haue taught him, that though the Lord suffereth tyrants to bee for a time a plague to any nation, yet in his oppointed time he suffereth them to bee punished

nished by other tirants, and to haue the same measure that they measured vnto others: Now if we compare Sennacherib, and Pompey that glozied in this title The great: which name Silla gaue him for his victories: we shall finde many things alike in their histories. Both of them was an axe in the hand of God to strike the people of the East: Both of them destroyed Palestina, and afflicted the people of God: Sennacherib besieged Ierusalem, Pompey tooke it, the Assirian was put to flight by an Angel and was slaine in his Temple, that is in his Sanctuary, by his owne Sonnes: Pompey was put to flying by Cæsar, and flying to Ptolomy King of Egipt, whose father being dispossessed of his kingdome, he had restored again to his crowne, and therefore Ptolomy should haue bene as a sonne vnto Pompey, was there in Egipt with him miserably slaine. So vnsearchable are the waies of Gods iudgements: for that which Michah speaketh of the Caldeans in the 4. chap. of his prophesie: (They know not the thoughts of the Lord, they vnderstand

ſtand not his councell, therefore they ſhall bee thraſhed as ſheaues in the barne, (may be ſpoken of all theſe Gyants and proude tyrants, who for that they know not the counſaile of the Lord, ſhall in his appointed time beare the puniſhment of their pride: Neither doth the holy Ghoſt teach vs, that the wicked only are puniſhed, but that the church of God is alſo afflicted though for another end and purpoſe: and there may many reaſons bee brought, to ſhew why the church of God is ſubiect to ſo many calamities, but I will at this time alleadge onely three, by which as by many other wee may know, that the Lord in truth and iudgement, doth exerciſe his church with afflictions. The firſt is that ſo long as wee carry about with vs this burthen of corruption, we are not only ſubiect to ſinne, but doe continually by ſinning prouoke the Lord to deale in iuſtice with vs: and therefore it is agreeable to the iuſtice of GOD, that wee bee chaſtned of the Lord with a fatherly rod, which may keepe vs in obedience: Yea wee muſt all

ſay

say with Ieremy in the third chapter of his Lamentations, verse 22. It is the Lords mercies, that wee are not consumed, because his compassions faile not.

My second reason is this: It is best for vs to bee humbled vnder the mighty hand of God: for wee know how fierce and haughty minded wee are by nature, so that it is necessary for vs, that GOD keepe vs vnder his schooling, and so haue vs in some awe: therefore Dauid saith in the 119. Psal. vers. 67. Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now I keepe thy word, & vers: 71. It is good for mee that I haue beene afflicted, that I may learne thy statutes. The third reason is deliuered by Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians the 11. Chapter, vers. 32. When wee are iudged wee are chastned of the Lord, because wee would not bee condemned with the world: Therefore let vs conclude this whole discourse with Moses thus: The iudgements of the Lord are true and righteous, neyther let vs measure them according to our own conceit & iudgements which are

are very deceiueable, but let vs know that the Godly are punished for their sinnes they dayly commit, that they may be humbled, and that they perish not with the wicked; but God in punishing the wicked, doth shew & open the treasures of his long sufferance, patience and iustice: but when hee afflicteth vs, hee maketh vs like to his owne Sonne Christ, and stirreth vp in vs an earnest desire to bee dissolued and to be with Christ.

Let vs in the meane time giue our selues to harty and earnest prayers, praying continually with the Saints of God.

Come Lord IESVS, yea come quickly. Amen, Amen.